Mr. Howard Bray
Fund for Investigative Hournalism, Inc.
1346 Connecticut Ave., NW
Wash., D.C. 20036

9/19/76

Dear Howard,

Your visit and your subsequent call mean much to me. It also means much that you read me the way I am and correctly understand my determination to establish truth to the degree it is possible for humans. I suppose it is true on all controversial and political issues but with the passions entained in the political assassinations the certain way to be close to friendless and the assurance of unpopularity lie in trying hard to go down the middle, to stick to fact. However, despite these years of painful experiences I remain dedicated to fact and honesty as the obligation of those of us who write & so the people may know and society can have a chance to function as it should.

Your unsolicited offer to try to be of help also means much. I'll return to that.

As soon as our recent hearings were over I told Jim I had told you to ask him for a date when we're reasonable certain not to be in court. However, as of Friday, it looks as though I will be home all the time until Thursday, the 30th. We are in court then and October 1 as of now. I do not think that there will be a court appearance in the third FOIA suit before then because the next step is the government's filing of responses to interrogatories, now overdue. After that we'll be doing the unprecedented if I can find a way of paying for it, deposing retired FBI agents and others in the September 30 case. I actually forced their retirement so the government could claim they need not respond to discovery procedures and with some magnificent briefing by Jim won the right to do this on appeal. (The government will, I think, delay and then file a petition cert.) In each of these cases I think there are important stories, each in its own way separately important to journalists and freedom of information.

Jim and I have had much more impact on this Act and the amending of it than is recognized. We have already laid a basis for defending it against the government's easily predicted intent to have it amended and weakened. Overtly this g began this past Thursday. Covertly it began before the effective date of the amended act. Here also I see a worthwhile story.

I do not want to write any of these stories. I'll be glad to work with anyone who would take a responsible approach, however, and to make what I have available.

Beginning about 1967 I had to rethink my position and to begin recasting the role in which I can be of social usefulness. I am now in a similar position. This is the reason I write.

My current rethinking has two major causes. The first is the change in my health situation. The second is the creation of the House committee and its personnel and hangers-on. I am apprehensive about both.

So I would like it very much if you can come up again, the sooner the better, to discuss a number of matters with me. Among these is a magazine piece I would like to do on Mark Lane, who is the current chief obstacle to the establishing of truth, the major bad influence on the House committee, although he probably has much to do with the passing of the resolution. He is and has been the kiss of death, going back to his first book, which was, in the words of one of his associates, intended to persuade Earl Warren to kill himself. Ken Crawford, who I had not seen since the 1940s, may remember that as soon as I heard of this and the pending Newsweek story on Lane's book I went to see him about this. I think an expose story by me on Lane might be acceptable where otherwise I would not be.

Over one weekend in 1968 I wrote a book on Lane while I was preparing for an investigatory trip to New Orleans. The tentative title is A Citizen's Descent, a pun on his

then new second book, A Citizen's Dissent. It is wretched. It is as dishonest an attack on all the media as I have ever seen. However, before I saw it, I was glad he had written it because the role of the media should have been exposed. His dishonesties, his excesses, make it a very bad book and the criticisms unjustified. My purposes were not to "get" Lane. They were to be prepared to prevent what he was making possible, a mistrial in the Shaw case. I wanted that to go to trial. Edited and updated I think that would make a worthwhile book, one that could be a force for stability and reason in a a field in which paranoia is rampant on a field of schizophrenia.

That is one of the books I've drafted that I've never had a chance to read. There is another, part expose, tentatively titled The Unimpeachment of Richard Nixon. I had it completed before he resigned and then wrote an almost complete new conclusion. There are others in various stages of completion, all involving a kind of investigatory journalism. As of now I recall only two I want to write myself. One is Tiger to Ride: The Untold Story of the Cuba Missile Crisis, the other is Agent Oswald. I've drafted about five chapters of the second one. The research on the first has been completed for years.

I would like to discuss these and other works and properties with you.

In this context. If no foundation comes forward to support my work and wants another arrangement, all of my records, going back to the period before World War II, will go to the Wisconsin Historical Association, which serves all the Universities of Wisconsin. (They also want to do oral histories for which I have not had time.) I think it could all work together very nicely.

Aside from their values in political and social sciences there is considerable literary potential in these files and my work going back for more than 40 years. As one example there was a financial/military plot to overthrown FDR. I gave all of those files to the FBI, which retained those directly relating to this plot. I have an FOIA request pending since October on their return. Anticipating that they would filch these, I arranged to make a minor record that can be retrieved easily if Jack Spivack does not have his records. (I gave him much of his financial information and all the leads on the rest for his expose of Father Coughlin, The Shrine of the Silver Dollar.) On the other extreme there is the essence of a doctoral thesis on the Warren Commission executive sessions. It would make a lasting and important book. Contrary to Tad Szulc' and the New Republic's representations, it is I who have forced all of the ended suppressions of these. I think I mentioned this in connection with Rolling Stone. I can show you my offers of the ancillary rights to HR, which instead stole it all. The FOIA case in which the government's responsee to our interrogatories is overdue, C.A. 75-1448, is for the two complete and one partial transcripts still withheld. In between there are a number of items of real commercial potential, all socially useful.

These are some of the matters I would like to be able to discuss with you. I hope your schedule and your interests permit it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg